

## Section 9. Communications and Outreach

### 9.1 Introduction

The development of the Monitoring Strategy and the move toward implementation require an important set communication tools to make sure State and local agencies, tribes, public interest groups, the business sector, and the general public have access to information on a timely basis. Without a concerted communications and outreach effort, expected changes to air monitoring networks may not be understood and appreciated for their benefits, which are summarized below. A more specific communications strategy, plan, and products will be developed and implemented by EPA with collaboration from STAPPA/ALAPCO, NMSC and Tribes.

#### 9.1.1 Benefits to State and Local Air Agencies, Public Interest Groups and the General Public

- *Increased data to the public:* The Strategy seeks to incorporate new, continuous technologies into the national network. Incorporation of these new technologies will lead to more efficient, electronic reporting of real-time data (similar to the ozone network reporting system). Moving from filter-based methods and periodic reporting, to continuous methods and subsequent satellite-GIS type reporting via internet networks will provide the public with more timely and current information.
- *Conservation of Resources.* Periodic review, assessment, and realignment of the monitoring network assure that resources are prudently invested to meet the most pressing air monitoring needs. This does not mean omitting monitors in crucial areas: it simply means using the local regional assessment to determine which monitors are providing redundant or little-value-added information and relocating them to locations which will provide more meaningful data.
- *Integrated NCore Monitoring.* Since NCore sites will include multiple-pollutant measurements, the foundation for health studies is improved, and future information about pollutant health effects will benefit the public. Also, a local area will have a basis for comparing its local measurements with national data, since each NCore Level 2 site will include similar monitors, FRM methods, and laboratory techniques. Trend assessments will also be performed at the NCore sites, which will yield more valuable information about the local area's air quality in relation to the Nation.
- *More Resources for Local Issues.* As NCore is implemented, there will be greater emphasis on monitoring programs to meet local needs. This flexibility, created by splitting Federal funds between Level 2-3 NCore sites and local sites, will allow agencies to monitor for pollutants which are of greatest importance to local communities. These needs could cover hot-spot monitoring, local source

characterization, environmental justice issues, or any other need the local authority deems necessary.

- *Public Involvement.* A public education and outreach program is needed to communicate the purposes of air monitoring networks and to ensure adequate public involvement early in the process. State, local and tribal agencies are encouraged to identify special interest groups and conduct outreach efforts as appropriate to discuss potential monitoring network changes, with the understanding that monitors are placed to meet specific objectives, both national and local. Once those objectives are met, site and monitor relocations are a necessary process to assure that new objectives and priorities will be met in the best way possible. The public needs to be aware that consolidation or relocation of a monitor or monitoring station within a community means an improvement in the quality, value, and timeliness of the information provided by the network. SLTs are working with EPA to develop such a public education and outreach program.

### **9.1.2 Benefits to the Research and Academic Community**

The networks operated by State and local agencies provide an enormous resource of “routine” data that complement the more advanced measurements conducted by research organizations. The data help them attempt to uncover the specific causes of adverse health effects related to air pollution, or test air quality simulation models that try to replicate the complex physical and chemical behavior of the atmosphere.

The NCore network will be designed to ensure that long-term research interests will benefit from the routine monitoring conducted by SLTs. This strategy recognizes the leveraging value of a spectrum of other air monitoring efforts, including intensive research oriented studies (NARSTO, PM<sub>2.5</sub> Supersites, CRPAQS, PM health centers), deposition monitoring (CASTNET, IADN, NADP) and numerous other smaller research projects. NCore will also provide, via the Level 1 “supersites,” several national locations convenient for testing newly developed monitoring instruments under differing meteorological and air pollutant regimes.

It is anticipated that the NCore approach will meet scientific air monitoring needs to a much greater degree than the networks currently provide.

### **9.1.3 Benefits to Tribal Communities**

The Strategy will have many of the same benefits for tribal air programs as it does for State and local agencies. However, the benefits of additional flexibility in targeting monitoring to each reservation’s needs and priorities will be particularly important for the tribes. This flexibility is particularly important because the tribes are in the process of assessing air quality on Indian lands, and thus have ability to explore environmental and health concerns that are specific to their needs.

There is an additional resource benefit for the tribes as well. Because the tribes are in the initial stages of monitoring, air program development and resources for conducting monitoring on Indian lands are extremely limited. Monitoring equipment released from the network from other areas may be available for tribes at little or no cost. Given that there is very limited existing air monitoring on Indian lands, such instruments might provide air quality information that otherwise might not be available. But not all reservations or Indian communities will need or want to conduct monitoring. In these areas, the Strategy can provide information on local and national air quality that can help tribes and community members track air quality trends in their area.

It is expected that tribal participation in the Strategy will enhance the value of NCore by meeting specific Strategy objectives that might not be fully met by state and local agencies alone, such as rural siting, urban-rural couplets, or possibly transport or background needs. While it is envisioned that most tribal air monitoring will be at the Level 3 or local level, those tribes that have the expertise and resources to establish a Level 2 site will be able to help meet these specific objectives.

## **9.2 How This Information Will be Communicated**

The essential information contained in the preceding paragraphs need to be communicated effectively to several different audiences. To do this, several communication products are currently being planned and/or developed:

- (1) *Fact Sheet.* At approximately the same time as the release of the Draft Strategy Document, a fact sheet will be posted on AMTIC and distributed to SLTs explaining, in general terms, the technical need for a revised air monitoring strategy. This fact sheet is approximately two pages in length, and covers points on continuous monitoring technology as well as establishment of an “NCore” network. This item will target most audiences.
- (2) *Quarterly Newsletter.* Beginning August 2002, a quarterly newsletter is being distributed on AMTIC. (The website address is:

<http://www.epa.gov/ttn/amtic/newsltr.html>

The newsletter provides updates on reviews, availability of materials (documents and presentations), the regional assessments, and other timely topics. The target audience is agency, tribal, and all public/private representatives with a more detailed interest in the latest progress for the Strategy.

- (3) *Specialized Briefing Presentations.* Several packaged slide presentations are being developed for use and dissemination to different audiences. One will be more technical and detailed and will be targeted for use by EPA

Regional representatives, and SLTs (regional briefing package). A second presentation will be tailored for public interest groups, and knowledgeable groups and individuals (public interest briefing package). A third presentation will be simpler and less technical, and can be used by federal, state and local agencies and tribes in communicating the Strategy to the general public (public-oriented briefing package). Having these packages available will help to assure consistency in communications throughout the country.

- (4) *Monitoring Strategy Brochure.* A trifold (or similar) brochure will be developed for a simplified, concise, non-technical explanation of the Strategy and air monitoring networks in general. This brochure will be developed by EPA, and coordinated with STAPPA/ALAPCO, for distribution shortly after the finalization of the Strategy Document in early 2003. The brochure is targeted primarily for the general public.

### **9.3 Preliminary Schedule**

In developing a communications strategy, the following preliminary schedule has been developed:

August 2002 – December 2003: Quarterly Newsletter posted on AMTIC

September 2002:       Release of Fact Sheet  
                                  Communications plan developed

Fall 2002:       Availability of regional and public interest briefing packages

Winter 2003: Release of Final Strategy Document  
                                  Press release issued by EPA  
                                  Brochure completed for distribution to the public  
                                  Availability of local, public-oriented briefing package

### **9.4 Review and Feedback**

Proceeding forward with the finalization of the Strategy will require important feedback from the scientific community, state and local air agencies, tribes, interested environmental and industry/business groups, and the general public. The NMSC has put forth its best effort in constructing the framework for the Strategy, but it is extremely important for the NMSC to receive constructive commentary. To that end, two approaches are being taken:

- (1) *Scientific Review and Feedback.* A subcommittee of the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC) is expected to be convened in the Fall of 2002.

This committee will review the Strategy and provide comments on its scientific merit. Also, interactions with other scientific groups have already occurred, including the Air Quality Research subcommittee of the Committee for Environment and Natural Resources (CENR), the NARSTO Executive Assembly, and the PM Supersite Principal Investigators. It should be noted, too, that a representative from EPA-ORD is a member of the NMSC, providing scientific guidance and perspective to the NMSC during its development of the draft Strategy.

- (2) *Agency/Tribe/Stakeholder/Public Feedback.* Through the release of this document and the companion Summary Document, all interested persons are invited to review and comment on the Strategy. Comments are due by Friday, November 22, 2002, and should be sent to:

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The NMSC will review comments prior to finalizing the National Air Monitoring Strategy Document, likely in early 2003.